



The Electronic Frailty Index (eFI): Transforming Care for Older People



Older people living with frailty account for approximately

£6 billion of annual NHS expenditure

International guidelines recommend routine frailty identification to enable holistic care and effective treatments. However, traditional assessment methods such as walking speed tests or questionnaires require additional resources and are **impractical to implement at scale**.



In a global first, we led the **development and UK-wide implementation** of the

electronic Frailty Index: eFI

eFI uses routinely collected primary care electronic health record (EHR) data to quickly spot signs of frailty in patients. This helps doctors provide and plan the right care at the right time, which can help people stay healthier longer.



Researchers tested eFI on over a million patients' records to make sure it could correctly identify people who were at higher risk of needing extra care. eFI confirmed that people identified with mild, moderate and severe frailty were at **significantly higher risk of nursing home admission, hospitalisation and mortality**.

Within 12 months of publication, the eFI was implemented into the SystemOne, EMISWeb, Vision and Microtest primary care EHR systems.

eFI is now available in 100% of general practices in England and 95% of all UK practices



This led to an NHS England policy change in 2018, establishing a new GP contractual requirement for frailty identification and management. This means that GP's in England must now check their patients for signs of frailty and provide proper care plans for patients who are becoming frail.

NHS England data shows that in the first year following implementation of the eFI:

- Over **2.5 million** older people were assessed for frailty.
- Around **1 million** were identified with moderate or severe frailty.
- 25,570 people were referred to falls services, preventing an approx 2,300 falls, **saving £6.9 million**
- **210,687** people received medication reviews.
- A further **54,000 older people with severe frailty** received evidence-based medicines reviews following 2021 policy changes.

The eFI has influenced international practice and has been incorporated into multiple national clinical guidelines. It continues to inform NHS policy, including the 2019 NHS Long Term Plan and the 2023 proactive care framework.